

How to make Herbal Tinctures

Why tinctures primarily; not teas or capsule form?

- ✚ Our digestion, adsorption, and excretion of the food requires 2/3 of all the phyto-nutrients/nutrients taken in, in the food
- ✚ Herbs are food therefore, in order to get as much of the nutritional/phyto-nutritional elements from these plants, or herbs as we can for their 'medicinal' benefit, it is necessary for us to prepare them in such a way as to by-pass the digestive processes, and still retain ALL of the nutritional elements of the herb. That is where tincturing comes in as I will explain in a moment.
Some of those elements are flavonoids, tannins, alkaloids, volatile oils, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and enzymes.
- ✚ Powdering them and putting them into capsules still requires the full digestive process, so only 1/3 of the nutritional elements are available for the "medicinal" effect which is: detoxing, cleansing, rebuilding, maintaining/boosting, and etc, needs.
- ✚ Placing these herbs in water and simmering them--called a decoction or tea, renders about 2/3 of these nutritional elements available directly to the body's cells for a "medicinal" response.
- ✚ Tincturing them will net you at least 90% of just about all of the nutritional elements +/- 10-15% of some specific nutrients. The alcohol actually lyses open, or splits open all cell membranes of the herb and sucks out the phyto-nutrients, then preserving them in the alcohol. Most of these tinctures can be kept effectively for over a hundred years if kept out of light.
- ✚ When you drop the tincture into hot water, which is anything above 130 degrees F. within 20 minutes the alcohol will be completely evaporated and the nutritional elements are left in the water. Now this is also called a tea, and is very close to the decoction, but more effective.
Dropping this into anything besides hot water, will render only part of the alcohol evaporated.
- ✚ The best alcohol to use is the purest grain alcohol available, no flavorings etc. Vodka made in stainless steel is the best. Cheapest is ok.
- ✚ Use only quality herbs, those that have been guaranteed to be non-fumigated, non-irradiated, and organic or wildcrafted in the USA, or your own country. When they come into the USA from other countries they are ALWAYS gassed with ethylene oxide, and irradiated. Both of these cause cancer, and the former causes genetic mutations in the unborn. In 3rd world countries where most herbs come from, the herbs are not always mature or picked at peak harvest time, dried correctly, or clean. The workers are often not sanitary and E-coli can be found on the herbs, so the fumigating has been established

WHEN TINCTURING

- ✦ Use glass jars. Any size that will accommodate your amount of herb that you need tintured. Lids that are plastic do better than metal. If using metal be sure to line the lid with a layer of plastic, otherwise you will have heavy metals in your tincture and be ingested into your cells as well. Wide mouth jars are best
- ✦ Fill the jar to slightly more than $\frac{1}{2}$ full of dry cut herb; only occasionally that is too much. Lobelia and skullcap are two of the herbs that will require only about $\frac{1}{2}$ a jar full.
- ✦ Next, cover the herb with pure alcohol, Vodka would be one, with the proper proof or strength.
 - 100 proof is for all hard herbs like roots, seeds, bark and resinous leaves such as chaparral.
 - 80 proof is for the easily crushed parts such as flowers, leaves, and stems.
 - 120 proof is the best for the hard ones, but 100 proof will do as the 120 proof is difficult to obtain.
- ✦ Allow the herb time to sit and soak up all of the alcohol that it possible can, then add more alcohol sufficient to cover the herb. That means that when your tincture has soaked up all the alcohol that it is capable of, and has settled down; that for the proportion of herb to alcohol should be that the free standing alcohol above the level of the herb is only about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. This is a standard 1:1 proportion.
- ✦ Once the herbs have sat in the alcohol for a minimum of two weeks they are no longer of any benefit and can be spun out, or strained, then tossed. The liquid is the usable part which now has the valuable nutrients in it. This must be stored in the dark.
- ✦ Should you want a stronger herbal tincture, spin the herb out of the tincture in two or more week's time and then add the same amount of dry herb a second time. This will give you to the 3rd power. If you do this same procedure a second time it will be to the 7th power. These are useful in making salves and pastes when you want it really strong. On occasion I do this with red clover for its blood thinning capacity.
- ✦ Another practice that should be done if possible to render the tincture as strong as you can is to blend it after 4 or so days. This increases the surface area for the alcohol to work more thoroughly.
- ✦ Shake these tinctures daily; twice a day if you can employ children or have the time.

- ✦ Harvesting: If after two weeks you must have all of the tincture strained then go for it, but it is best to keep the liquid on the herb until you cannot pour anymore off; then spin it out, strain it out, or however you choose to do it
- ✦ Keep all tinctures out of the light. This is the ONLY thing that will spoil the tincture. They keep for 100 years done this way.
- ✦ If you are in a great need for the tincture, as soon as you have set it, watch for good color to come out in the alcohol, then you can begin to use on it. It will work very well at that time. Usually that will be in about 24 hours. By the end of two weeks it will pretty much have finished its lysing, or splitting open of the cells, and can be considered finished and ready for harvest.